

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant has carefully reviewed and considered the Office Action mailed on April 15, 2008, and the references cited therewith. Claims 1 – 13 were presented for examination. Claims 1, 3, 6 and 11 stand objected to, and are herein amended. Claims 1, 3, 6 and 11 are herein amended.

Claim Rejections Under §112

Claims 1 – 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, Claim 1 stands rejected for providing an insufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “said resilient clips.” In response, Claim 1 is herein amended to overcome the rejections. Each of Claims 2 – 5 depend from allowable Claim 1 and should, in the opinion of counsel, be deemed allowable as a matter of law without additional argument.

Additionally, Claims 6, 8 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as indefinite for being unclear. In response, Claims 6, 8 and 11 are herein amended to overcome the rejections. Claim 7 depends from allowable Claim 6 and should, in the opinion of counsel, be deemed allowable as a matter of law without additional argument. Each of Claims 12 – 13 further depend from allowable Claim 11 and should, in the opinion of counsel, be deemed allowable as a matter of law without additional argument.

Finally, Claims 9 – 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 for reciting a narrowly ranged limitation within a broadly range limitation, which does not clearly set forth the metes and bounds of the patent protection desired. Accordingly, Claims 9 – 10 are herein amended to overcome the rejections.

Claim Rejections Under §103

Claims 1 – 2, 4 – 6 and 8 – 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gillet (4,637,741) in view of Masuada, *et al.* (DE 198 48 289). Additionally, Claims 3 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gillet (4,637,741) in view of Masuada, *et al.* (DE 198 48 289), and further in view of WO 94/07040. Claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 stand further rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as

being unpatentable over Rouviere (FR-2 796 012) in view of Masuada, *et al.* (DE 198 48 289).

Claim 1

As to Claim 1, the Office states that although Gillet does not disclose a cup-shaped portion comprising at least two clips, it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified the device of Gillet such that the cup-shaped portion comprises at least two clips, as taught by Masuada, for the purpose of increasing the strength of the connection.

Applicant respectfully traverses this ground for rejection by the Office because the teachings of Masuada would not have led to the subject matter of Claim 1. Specifically, Gillet fails to teach or suggest any of the following:

1. A clip being provided as **a resilient strap.**
2. The clip being connected to the head portion **at one side of the clip only.**
3. A portion of the head portion to which the clip is connected is **a cup-shaped portion.**
4. The **clips** radially extending to the outside **in a tangential direction with respect to the cylindrical surface of the cup-shaped portion;** and
5. The clips **connected** to the cup-shaped portion **at a connection line, which is axially oriented with respect to the shaft.**

Combining the teachings of Masuada and Gillet would not be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art since the skilled artisan, starting from the self-locking shaft of Gillet, has no apparent motivation to combine the features of Gillet with those of Masuada. Moreover, the clips of Masuada extend radially **to the inside**, as opposed to the outside, with respect to the cylindrical surface of the cup-shaped portion. Additionally, the “cap-shaped” portion taught in Masuada, which differs from the claimed “cup-shaped” portion, is not disposed as “a head portion of the shaft,” as claimed.

Claim 1 further states that the latching action of the clips is via *a rotational mounting motion of the shaft with respect to the support*, and not by an axial movement of the cap member as taught by Masuada. The method taught by Masuada results in the tappet surfaces (7) of the engaging projections (6) to abut against the end (23b) of the

cylindrical body (23), and the locking arms are radially bent outward. On further advancement of the cap-shaped portion, tips (9) of the engaging projections (6) slide on the peripheral wall (23a) of the cylindrical body (23).

The Office further contends that it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of Rouviere such that the cup-shaped portion comprises at least two clips, as taught by Masuada, for the purpose of increasing the strength of the connection.

The applicant respectfully traverses this ground for rejection because a skilled artisan, starting from the self-locking shaft of Rouviere, has no motivation to combine the features of Rouviere with those of Masuada. Specifically, Gillet fails to disclose the following:

1. A **cup-shaped** portion having a cylindrical surface which is coaxially aligned with the shaft portion.
2. A cup-shaped portion comprising **at least two clips**.
3. Resilient clips **radially extending tangentially to the outside with respect to the cylindrical surface of the cup-shaped portion**.
4. The connection line of the clips with respect to the head portion is **axially oriented with respect to the shaft**.

Additionally, Claim 1 is herein amended to further distinguish it from the subject matter of the prior art, and is now deemed allowable in light of the art of record.

Claim 5

Regarding Claim 5, the Office suggests that a product-by-process claim is recited and should not be given patentable weight in an apparatus claim. Additionally, the Office contends that it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the parts of a plastic material for the purpose of reducing weight. In response, Claim 5 is herein amended to conform with typical apparatus claim practice and is therefore deemed allowable as a matter of law without additional argument. Furthermore, Claim 5 depends from allowable Claim 1 and should, in the opinion of counsel, be deemed allowable as a matter of law without additional argument.

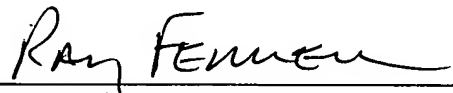
CONCLUSION

In view of the forgoing, Applicant respectfully submits that each of the outstanding grounds of rejection pending in the case has been overcome, and the application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of the case at an early date, are respectfully requested.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees, deficiencies, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-2413 of Adams and Reese LLP.

Respectfully submitted,
ADAMS AND REESE LLP

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